IN THE CLAIMS:

Cancel claims 45 and 47 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend the claims as shown below:

Claims 1-4 (cancelled)

Claim 5 (previously presented): An isolated polynucleotide, comprising the nucleic acid sequence as shown in SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claims 6 and 7 (cancelled)

Claim 8 (previously presented) An isolated polynucleotide sequence, which encodes a polypeptide which comprises the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 9 (currently amended): A ~~recombinant~~ coryneform bacterium ~~comprising~~ transformed with an isolated cstA gene ~~having the~~ comprising a polynucleotide sequence ~~of SEQ ID NO: 1, wherein said cstA gene~~ which encodes a polypeptide ~~having~~ comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2~~, and wherein said recombinant bacterium is obtained after transformation with a vector comprising said cstA gene~~.

Claim 10 (previously presented): The coryneform bacterium according to claim 9, wherein the cstA gene is over-expressed by increasing the copy number of the cstA gene or by operably linking a promoter to the cstA gene.

Claim 11 (previously presented): The shuttle vector Escherichia coli DH5alphamcr/pEC-K18mob2cstAexp deposited as DSM 13671.

Claim 12 (withdrawn): A method for the fermentative preparation of L-amino acids in coryneform bacteria, comprising:

a) fermenting, in a medium, the coryneform bacteria which produce the desired L-amino acid and in which at least the cstA gene or nucleotide sequences which code for it are enhanced.

Claim 13 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, further comprising

b) concentrating the L-amino acid in the medium or in the cells of the bacteria.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 13, further comprising

c) isolating the L-amino acid.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the L-amino acids are L-lysine.

Claim 16 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein at least the cstA gene or nucleotide sequences which code for it are over-expressed.

Claim 17 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the bacteria comprise additional genes of the biosynthesis pathway of the desired L-amino acid are enhanced.

Claim 18 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein bacteria in which the metabolic pathways which reduce the formation of the desired L-amino acid are at least partly eliminated are employed.

Claim 19 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein a strain transformed with a plasmid vector is employed, and the plasmid vector carries the nucleotide sequence which codes for the cstA gene.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the expression of the polynucleotide which codes for the cstA gene is enhanced.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 20, wherein the expression of the polynucleotide which codes for the cstA gene is over-expressed.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): A method according to claim 12, wherein the regulatory properties of the polypeptide for which the polynucleotide cstA codes are increased.

Claim 23 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the bacteria being fermented comprise, at the same time, one or more genes which are enhanced; wherein the one or more genes is/are selected from the group consisting of:

the lysC gene which codes for a feed back resistant aspartate kinase,
the dapA gene which codes for dihydrodipicolinate synthase,
the gap gene which codes for glycerolaldehyde 3-phosphate dehydrogenase,
the pgk gene which codes for 3-phosphoglycerate kinase,
the pyc gene which codes for pyruvate carboxylase,
the tpi gene which codes for triose phosphate isomerase,
the lysE gene which codes for lysine export, and
the zwa1 gene which codes for the Zwa1 protein.

Claim 24 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 23, wherein the one or more genes are overexpressed.

Claim 25 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein the bacteria being fermented comprise, at the same time, one or more genes which are attenuated; wherein the one or more genes is/are selected from the group consisting of:

the pck gene which codes for phosphoenol pyruvate carboxykinase,

the pgi gene which codes for glucose 6-phosphate isomerase,

the poxB gene which codes for pyruvate oxidase, and

the zwa2 gene which codes for the Zwa2 protein.

Claim 26 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 12, wherein microorganisms of the genus Corynebacterium glutamicum are employed.

Claim 27 (previously presented): A coryneform bacterium comprising a vector which comprises a polynucleotide according to claim 5.

Claim 28 (withdrawn): A method for discovering RNA, cDNA and DNA in order to isolate nucleic acids, or polynucleotides or genes which code for carbon starvation protein A or have a high similarity with the sequence of the cstA gene, comprising contacting the RNA, cDNA, or DNA with hybridization probes comprising polynucleotide sequences according to claim 1.

Claim 29 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 28, wherein the hybridization is carried out under a stringency corresponding to at most 2x SSC.

Claim 30 (withdrawn): The method according to claim 28, wherein arrays, micro arrays or DNA chips are employed.

Claim 31 (canceled)

Claim 32 (previously presented): An isolated polynucleotide comprising the complete complement of SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claims 33-36 (canceled)

Claim 37 (currently amended): An isolated polynucleotide consisting of SEQ ID NO: 1 or a fragment thereof which encodes ~~a~~ the protein consisting of the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO: 2.

Claim 38 (previously presented) An isolated polynucleotide comprising nucleotides 200 to 2515 of SEQ ID NO: 1.

Claim 39 (currently amended): An isolated polynucleotide consisting of: ~~at least 30 consecutive nucleotides selected from SEQ ID NO: 1~~

i) a DNA fragment of SEQ ID NO: 1 or

ii) a DNA fragment of the complete complement of SEQ ID NO: 1,

wherein said fragment consists of at least 30 consecutive nucleotides.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The isolated polynucleotide according to claim 39, wherein the polynucleotide is a primer or a probe.

Claim 41 (currently amended): A ~~recombinant~~ bacterium ~~comprising~~ transformed with the isolated polynucleotide of claim 5~~, wherein said recombinant bacterium is obtained after transformation with a vector comprising said polynucleotide~~.

Claim 42 (canceled)

Claim 43 (currently amended): A bacterium ~~comprising~~ transformed with the isolated polynucleotide of claim 37.

Claim 44 (currently amended): A ~~recombinant~~ bacterium ~~comprising~~ transformed with the isolated polynucleotide of claim 38~~, wherein said recombinant bacterium is obtained after transformation with a vector comprising said polynucleotide~~.

Claim 45 (canceled)

Claim 46 (previously presented): A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of any one of claims 5, 8, 37 or 38.

Claim 47 (canceled)